



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 56th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/37/6, A/37/7, A/37/38, A/37/154 and Corr.1 and 2, A/37/206 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/37/207, A/37/460, A/37/650, A/37/3 (Part II), chap. VI, sect. C; E/1982/INF.12, decision 1982/173; A/C.5/37/25, A/C.5/37/53)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION

(b) MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1984-1989

(c) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. Mr. SHRESTHA (Nepal) said that, from the point of view of the effort undertaken for 15 years to improve the efficiency of the activities of the United Nations, The proposed medium-term plan and the draft regulations and rules governing programme planning, along with the observations of the Joint Inspection Unit, constituted the most useful practical instrument available.

2. In relation to the intentions of the General Assembly, it could well be thought, as CPC noted in paragraph 57 of its report (A/37/38), that the proposed medium-term plan before the Committee was "vague and declaratory" instead of leading to "a global and intersectoral plan defining the role of the individual United Nations entities", or, as the Joint Inspection Unit had noted, that the preparation of proposed programmes had not been carried out properly by some of those responsible.

3. Despite those reservations, Nepal believed that the proposed medium-term plan submitted by the Secretary-General was a well-founded instrument. It was at all events the most authoritative document produced on the subject in the United Nations system. Nepal, itself a land-locked country, particularly appreciated the importance attached to the programme for the least developed, land-locked and island countries. Those countries were experiencing particularly serious problems which justified the implementation of a programme enabling them to make a start and develop their potential in a situation dominated by difficulties connected with their distance from the sea and markets, the scarcity of their natural resources, their lack of skilled personnel and their substantial financial burdens. Nepal therefore hoped that activities under that programme would be constantly improved.

4. Mrs. KNEZEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the proposed medium-term plan, based on the new methodological approach and derived from the major policy documents, was a good framework for achieving the objectives of the United Nations in a more orderly and systematic way and thus contributed to the strengthening of the role and functioning of the Organization. The effectiveness of planning in the United Nations depended upon the active participation of all the parties concerned, co-ordination among the various bodies of the system, close linkage between the plan and the programme budget and the determination of time-limited objectives and the systematic monitoring and regular evaluation of the outputs of activities undertaken.

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(Mrs. Knezivic, Yugoslavia)

5. It was regrettable, however, that the procedures for determining the order of priority among programmes established under General Assembly resolution 36/228 A, part II, had not been taken into account. It was equally regrettable that no definite time-limited objectives had been set, as such objectives were of particular significance for the medium-term plan since they made possible a proper evaluation of both the progress achieved and the quality of work. There were also inconsistencies among the major programmes and between those programmes and the subprogrammes and a lack of uniformity in the way in which the various activities covered by the plan were envisaged. Despite those shortcomings, however, her delegation welcomed the proposed medium-term plan.

6. As a result of the adoption at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly of the principle of zero growth rate, programme planning had become highly sensitive and complex at both the expert and the political levels. Her delegation believed that the reallocation of resources within the units of the existing appropriations was an important mechanism for rationalizing the activities of the United Nations system. Nevertheless, that redeployment of resources and the elimination of overlapping, obsolete and inefficient programmes could only be complementary to the growth of the regular budget in the forthcoming years. If the activities envisaged in the plan were to be properly implemented as well as those activities that would probably be subsequently added, it would not be possible to maintain the principle of zero growth rate or, a fortiori, to reduce the budget. A moderate growth of real resources was the second assumption upon which the proposed medium-term plan had been drawn up. The regular budget therefore needed to increase in real terms, especially considering that more than half the resources needed to finance the activities envisaged were extrabudgetary funds and it was not certain whether those funds would be available.

7. Her delegation believed that the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 should be adopted at the current session and that it would help revitalize multilateral co-operation.

8. Her delegation also supported the recommendations made by CPC in its report (A/37/38), as well as the draft regulations governing programme planning submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/37/206/Add.1. It hoped that the proposals and alternatives to the draft regulations submitted by the Joint Inspection Unit in its remarkable report (A/37/460) would also be taken into account.

9. Mr. PLYUSHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), commenting on the report of the Secretary-General on programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1980-1981 (A/37/154 and Corr.1 and 2), said that the report, which should make it possible to evaluate the efficiency of the work of the Secretariat, showed the absence of a link between the two aspects of the planning process, programming and budgeting. The absence of that link made it impossible to determine to what extent the resources allocated to programmes had been used and what savings could have been made as a result of the non-implementation of planned activities. That deficiency had been confirmed by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination which noted in paragraph 21 of its report on the work of its twenty-second session (A/37/38) that no evaluative indicators had been used to make a qualitative assessment of programme performance.

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(Mr. Plyushko, Ukrainian SSR)

10. A comparison between the report of the Secretary-General and the documents concerning the financial aspects of programmes showed that non-utilized resources were not proportionate to the volume of non-implemented programmes. For example, over 25 per cent of the activities planned in 1980-1981 under section 6 (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) had not been implemented, but only 4 per cent of the appropriations made for those activities had been released.

11. The report on programme performance should therefore contain, as requested by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in its report, very precise information on each element of the programme: remuneration of all categories of personnel, administrative expenditure, etc.

12. With regard to the medium-term plan, article III, regulation 3.2 (c) of the draft regulations governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and methods of evaluation provided that the medium-term plan should give an indicative estimate of the necessary resources. That provision was not adequate; the medium-term plan should also contain information on available resources, taking into account the financial capacity of Member States. Furthermore, it should indicate the resources released as a result of the termination of obsolete and ineffective activities, as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in paragraph 22 of its report.

13. The proposed medium-term plan for 1984-1989 defined the overall priorities of the United Nations and took into account its principal goal which was to promote international peace and security. Thus his delegation was not opposed to the Committee recommending that the General Assembly adopt the proposed medium-term plan, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the recommendations made to the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council. At the same time, it wished to stress that none of the provisions could serve as the pretext for making additional appropriations. All new activities must be financed through a redeployment of existing resources, in application of the principle of zero growth.

14. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), noting the importance of the medium-term plan as an instrument for co-ordinating all the activities of the United Nations, said that the proposed plan for the period 1984-1986 (A/37/6) reflected, on the whole, an appropriate setting of priorities since it gave high importance to the main functions of the Organization, namely the maintenance of international peace and security, and action to promote decolonization and combat apartheid.

15. The functions assigned to the Organization should be translated into specific activities carried out in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of intergovernmental organs, taking duly into account the conclusions and recommendations reached by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its thirty-second session.

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(Mr. Belyaev, Byelorussian SSR)

16. The Secretariat should redouble its efforts to give tangible effect to the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in particular with regard to measures to strengthen the public sector, integrated planning, the carrying out of agrarian reform, assistance to co-operatives and the role of national managerial personnel.

17. The Byelorussian SSR attached great importance to the observations contained in chapter 17 of the proposed medium-term plan (A/37/6) on the subject of the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources (para. 17.2). It also wished to draw attention to the comments set out in chapter 10, in which it was stated that the investment of foreign private capital must be in accordance with the national legislation of countries concerned.

18. With regard to chapter 23 (Transnational corporations), he noted with satisfaction that, as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Secretariat had made progress in that area, in particular with respect to the preparation of a code of conduct and the elimination of the pernicious activities of transnational corporations, especially in developing countries.

19. In the area of social development, dealt with in chapter 21, subprogramme 5 relating to the participation of women in international affairs and the strengthening of peace was particularly important. It envisaged the adoption of the progressive measures advocated by the Copenhagen Conference, the implementation of which was meeting with well-known obstacles.

20. With regard to the problem of duplication, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had made some extremely useful recommendations, calling in particular for programmes to be drafted in more specific terms so that it would be easier to identify potential duplication. In that connection, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR was opposed to the establishment of any new information unit in the Secretariat. Moreover, it considered that subprogrammes 6, 7 and 8 of programme 1 in chapter 21 of the medium-term plan (Social development) should be merged.

21. The Byelorussian SSR, which supported most of the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning the medium-term plan, had reservations in principle with regard to the unjustified appearance of a chapter relating specifically to energy, which might subsequently be used as a pretext for the establishment of new organs or units of the Secretariat. The problem of energy should continue to be subsumed by other programmes and should be considered in accordance with the decisions of the competent intergovernmental organs. It was, moreover, indicated in paragraph 109 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that no change in the administrative structure of the Secretariat was foreseen at the current stage.

22. Along those same lines, the provisions of the medium-term plan must not be used as a pretext for requesting additional resources when preparing the programme budget proposals. All new activities must be financed from existing resources

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(Mr. Belyaev, Byelorussian SSR)

through the achievement of savings, the termination of programmes that were obsolete or ineffective, respect for the principle of zero growth and adherence to the established order of priorities.

22a. As to the technical aspects of planning, undeniable progress had been made. In that connection, particular attention should be paid to the recommendations of CPC relating to the review of the Financial Rules and Regulations and the monitoring of programme evaluation.

23. Turning to the problem of activities that were obsolete or of marginal usefulness, his delegation noted with satisfaction that the Secretariat was undertaking an initial comprehensive review. It regretted, however, that the report on that subject had not been considered in detail by CPC. The report contained suggestions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983, which had already been approved by the General Assembly. The CPC recommendations calling for the submission of such a comprehensive review to its next session would make it possible to review the suggestions of the Secretariat at the same time as the review of the programme budget. The Programme Planning and Budgeting Board should make an effort to identify and terminate activities that were obsolete. In addition, the Secretary-General should provide information on resources not used during the preceding biennium.

24. In pursuance of resolution 36/228, CPC had had to consider detailed draft rules, in addition to the draft regulations governing programme planning. It had not been able to do so at its twenty-ninth session since the Secretariat had not yet completed work on them. As a result of that failing, there had been a rush of recommendations from the various parties concerned, and the problems arising in that connection could not be resolved in time for a decision to be taken at the thirty-seventh session. Nevertheless, since the draft rules and regulations had no immediate consequences, his delegation would prefer work to be continued within the framework of a more specialized body than the Fifth Committee. The rules and regulations as a whole could then be adopted at the thirty-eighth session.

25. CPC should continue its cross-organizational programme analyses and its evaluation of the activities of United Nations agencies in various fields. The Secretariat should prepare the necessary documents at an early stage so that CPC could study the matter in all its aspects and thus more easily identify the activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system which entailed duplication.

26. Mr. YOUNIS (Iraq) said that the Committee was on the verge of taking an important decision on programming in the United Nations for the years to come. That decision, which would be taken after 15 years of study and discussion, would give a new dimension not only to the activities of the Organization but also to the 400 subprogrammes which would be carried out during the period 1984-1989 at a cost of some \$5 billion.

(Mr. Younis, Iraq)

27. It was generally agreed that the medium-term plan before the Committee should be focused on the objectives set by General Assembly resolutions and that subprogrammes should establish strategies for attaining those objectives using the resources which were available. In addition, the importance of the medium-term plan stemmed from the fact that it promoted the optimum use of the resources of the United Nations by helping to set priorities, avoid duplication and eliminate activities that were marginal or obsolete so that the available resources could be allocated for priority activities. That was precisely the aim of General Assembly resolution 36/228.

28. The proposed plan was the concrete embodiment of the basic policy of the United Nations with regard to planning, programming and evaluation. Nevertheless, there were gaps in that policy which needed to be filled. As the Chairman of JIU had indicated in paragraphs 11 to 22 of his report (A/37/460), the proposed medium-term plans consistently had major defects and the design of the plan was in need of review. His delegation concluded that that situation was due in part to the fact that the introduction of the reform was far from complete and that some methodological tools still had to be developed.

29. In addition, evaluation methods and the process of monitoring programme implementation should be defined more clearly. Many subprogrammes for various developing countries had not been carried out as planned, especially in the regional economic commissions, as could be seen from the Secretary-General's report on programme performance for the biennium 1980-1981 (A/37/154), especially tables 10 to 14. For example, the rate of programme performance had been rated "A" (i.e., between 75 and 100 per cent) for ECE and ECLA, while the implementation of programmes in ESCAP, ECWA and in ECA had fallen short of the targets set. Important programmes, such as those relating to natural resources, industrial development and science and technology had very low implementation rates, bordering on zero. With regard more specifically to table 14, relating to ECWA, during the years 1980-1981, only two programmes (Labour and Statistics) of the 13 planned had actually been carried out. According to the explanations provided on pages 31 and 32, such deviations were due basically to difficulties in filling vacant posts. There was no reference to the fact that any of the programmes were obsolete or of marginal usefulness.

30. That example created the impression that the programme planning and implementation process had certain weaknesses which sprang, in the opinion of the Iraqi delegation, from the lack of an effective evaluation and monitoring system.

31/32. With regard to evaluation, the current four-level implementation rating scale (A, B, C, D) did not give a sufficiently clear idea of output. He proposed the introduction of a 10-level classification, or the replacement of the letters by explanatory remarks (excellent, good, average or mediocre). He thought, as CPC stated in paragraph 25 of its report (A/37/38), that explanations given for implementation ratings of less than 50 per cent should be clearer and more detailed. Such ratings could be indicative of low priority and might justify terminations. Nevertheless, the situation being different at ECWA, where most

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(Mr. Younis, Iraq)

programmes had an implementation rating of less than 50 per cent, he agreed with CPC (para. 25) that, while termination because of duplication and overlapping was an indicator of improved programme co-ordination, explanations such as resource constraints and staff problems were invalid and indicated planning shortcomings. For that reason, his delegation supported the recommendation of CPC in paragraph 296 of its report: explanations for low implementation rates should contain thoroughly examined and clear information on all major reasons for that state of affairs.

33. For ECWA and ECA, the problem of post vacancies should not be a major obstacle to programme implementation. The financial resources made available to them were out of proportion to the results obtained, particularly at ECWA. It was unacceptable for ECWA, which was of vital importance to the region, to be in an impasse. It was illogical to plan programmes theoretically and to provide resources of more than \$42 million for the period 1984-1989 if the ECWA programme performance was to be such that the objectives established would not be attained and if half the resources were to be devoted to administrative expenses, staff salaries and joint activities. It was high time that the question of post vacancies in the regional economic commissions was included in the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit.

34. Particular importance should be accorded to the question of monitoring programme implementation and revising, where appropriate, article V of the draft regulations proposed by the Secretary-General in document A/37/206. The responsibilities of all those involved in implementation should be clearly specified. It was fortunate that the Secretary-General had recently established, further to resolution 36/228, a Central Monitoring Unit responsible for monitoring the implementation of programme commitments. Yet the Unit's mandate had still not been clearly laid down, and he wondered whether it would be placed under the authority of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board and if its staff would be so small that it would not be able to discharge its functions effectively. His delegation supported the CPC recommendation (A/37/38, para. 289) that the new Unit should be organized in such a way that it could ensure objectivity and independence in its work as well as effective accountability for the implementation of the work programme of the United Nations as a whole.

35. His delegation also endorsed the JIU recommendatin (A/37/460, para. 93) that the text of the preamble should refer to the need for instruments designed to monitor the execution and verify the effectiveness of the work done, but wondered if that responsibility would be entrusted to the recently established Central Monitoring Unit or some other facility.

36. With regard to evaluation, which deserved particular attention whether in the preamble or in the revision of article V, his delegation supported recommendation No. 1 referred to in paragraph 97 of the JIU report.

37. In conclusion, he emphasized that the Committee's efforts would be successful only if a harmonious dialogue was established between Member States and programme

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(Mr. Younis, Iraq)

managers. He felt that the Committee would be able to adopt the proposed draft regulations at the current session, and proposed the establishment of an open-ended working group which would facilitate the adoption, by consensus, of a document embodying the results of the efforts made over the years to establish a new world programme planning order.

38. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that despite its dedication to rigorous planning, his delegation would oppose any attempt to make the plan, through the introduction of the concept of zero growth, a means of restraining and hindering the normal development of the Organization's programmes. The various organs (JIU, CPC, United Nations Secretariat, Advisory Committee) which were striving to steer international co-operation in the right direction should seek to develop in a continuous and co-ordinated manner the current planning machinery, whose methods should consist in: (a) clearly identifying objectives; (b) establishing a proper management framework which would provide each executant with work plans and timetables; (c) devising strategies to attain the objectives; and (d) monitoring the execution of work plans and programmes. Objectives and methods were obviously not the same as in national planning, since United Nations activities, and to some extent those of the specialized agencies, were primarily determined by political considerations.

39. With regard to the elaboration of regulations for the planning, programming and evaluation cycle, the quality of work would depend on improved productivity and the efficient discharge of everyday tasks by the various units of the United Nations.

40. Inherent in planning were many difficulties, arising largely from the complexity of the Organization, the diversity of its programmes, which made any generalization impossible, the vagueness of long-term forecasts (in particular resource forecasts) and the rapid increase in the number of General Assembly decisions relating to specific situations.

41. In general, his delegation considered that the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 was well suited to the Organization's objectives. The competent Moroccan authorities had, however, made the following observations. Firstly, the objectives and policies defined in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade should have been more closely reflected in the medium-term plan, which could have served as a valuable indicator and facilitated more precise evaluation. Secondly, the concerns expressed in paragraph 330 of the Monrovia Strategy with regard to Africa - of which the annual rate of growth would undoubtedly be below the 7 per cent targeted - did not seem likely to be allayed by the plan, the introduction to which mentioned various intersectoral aspects of development but overlooked the varying degrees of development as between regions. Thirdly, the process of consultation with the national planning services remained inadequate, and the data on which the plan was based should more adequately reflect world development problems.

42. Despite those criticisms, and the many shortcomings which remained, his delegation considered the proposed plan under consideration to be far superior to the first one. The criticism expressed by CPC in paragraph 57 of its report (A/37/38) should provide a basis for improving the introduction.

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(Mr. Lahlou, Morocco)

43. The relationship between the Financial Regulations of the United Nations and the proposed programme planning regulations was evident to the extent that resources would be allocated according to priorities. With regard to revision of the Financial Regulations, which raised two questions, namely, the status of the programme narratives in the programme budget and the treatment of the programme aspects of supplementary programme budget proposals, his delegation endorsed the analysis by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 11 of its report (A/37/650).

44. Mr. van HELLENBERG HUBAR (Netherlands), recalling that the representative of Denmark had already made a statement on the subject of programme planning on behalf of the member States of the European Economic Community, said that he wished none the less to express his astonishment at the fact that the proposed medium-term plan had not been submitted to the Main Committees as JIU and CPC had recommended. It was essential for the Main Committees to discuss the relevant chapters of the medium-term plan if priority-setting was to have a proper basis. His delegation would like the members of the Secretariat in charge of the organization of the work of the Main Committees to explain why the Chairman of CPC and the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination had not been invited to introduce the medium-term plan in the Main Committees. It suspected that the failure to do so had been an attempt to frustrate programme planning.

45. It was disappointing to note that, during informal consultations on the draft regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and methods of evaluation, there had been attempts to reopen discussion on basic principles, even though the texts proposed did no more than codify existing legislation and should not prove difficult to adopt at the current session.

46. Effective programme planning would be seriously jeopardized if it was decided to exclude activities financed from extrabudgetary sources. Another serious threat was ACABQ's objection in its report on the draft regulations and rules (A/37/650) to the involvement of the Office of Programme Planning and Co-ordination in the establishment of the statements of administrative, financial and programme implications of draft resolutions. That seemed to be a defensive rear guard manoeuvre on the part of a Secretariat that still considered programme planning and the monitoring of programme execution as an encroachment on an area in which it intended to continue to rule undisturbed.

47. Mr. PAPENDORF (United States of America) said that, like the representative of the Netherlands, he deplored the reluctance of Member States and the Secretariat to face up to the necessity of establishing priorities among programmes and found it curious that the Secretariat encountered no difficulty in implementing resolutions that required the appropriation of additional funds but seemed unable to comply with those resolutions which asked it to identify programmes that could be postponed or eliminated. That inability to comply with General Assembly resolution 36/228 greatly lessened the chances of determining future activities and establishing realistic budgets. The next programme budget should not be based on financial considerations alone but must take into account both the economic

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

realities of the world and the degree of urgency of the various United Nations programmes, so that the available resources could be used wisely. Yet the Secretariat had not provided the requisite information, and the updated report on the special review of the ongoing work programme of the United Nations (A/C.5/37/51) had been issued so late that its usefulness was questionable. His delegation reserved the right to comment further when it had examined the ACABQ comments on the report.

48. The draft regulations and rules set out in documents A/37/206 and A/37/206/Add.1 prompted the most serious reservations, for they also, as currently drafted, called into question the value of the medium-term plan. A six-year planning period had been set to allow enough time for programmes to prove their worth and for programme managers to plan their activities over a substantial period. If the medium-term plan was to be revised every two years, as regulation 3.11 of the draft regulations stated, one might as well call it a short-term plan. It would instead be better to say that the plan would be reviewed every two years and revised only to the extent necessary. Although resolutions would be adopted in the interim, it was incumbent on all Member States to take only those decisions that were really necessary and called for activities within the scope of the medium-term plan. Once adopted, the medium-term plan should be the point of reference for Member States and the Secretariat alike, and the pertinent regulations and rules must authorize only well-justified revisions. The text as it now stood must therefore be redrafted. The medium-term plan, if properly forward-looking, represented the goals of the United Nations for a six-year period; after those goals were attained, new ones could be set for the following period.

49. His delegation in no way opposed the adoption of those portions of the medium-term plan already endorsed by other bodies. However, several subprogrammes of chapter 17 (Natural resources) had had to be referred back to the Secretariat for redrafting in the light of the recent decisions of the Conference on the Law of the Sea. In addition, his delegation recalled the reservation it had expressed in CPC regarding the so-called permanent sovereignty of States over natural resources, which it considered subject to the existing provisions of international law. It urged, further, that subprogramme 1 of programme 5 of chapter 16 (International trade) should not be adopted since a number of delegations found it unacceptable.

50. Subprogramme 5 of programme 1 of chapter 21 (Social development and humanitarian affairs), which dealt with the participation of women in international affairs and was based on draft resolutions that had never been adopted, should be redrafted in the light of the recent work of the Third Committee on the subject and of the Declaration recently adopted by the General Assembly. The other parts of the medium-term plan could, however, be adopted without delay.

51. His delegation also had difficulty in accepting regulation 4.3, which seemed to question the need to redeploy resources in the case of completed or low-priority programmes. Coupled with regulation 3.16, it gave the impression that the Secretariat was trying to avoid identifying such programmes. Yet the Secretary-General had a duty to draw to the attention of Member States programmes that were obsolete or ineffective, to recommend their termination, and to redeploy the resources thus freed.

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

51a. His delegation approved the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Central Monitoring Unit, which was to monitor the implementation of the activities approved by the Organization. It was to be regretted, however, that the draft regulations before the Committee virtually ignored the new unit and delegated the monitoring function to heads of departments and offices in its stead. The heads of departments and offices were, furthermore, given too much discretion with respect to programme modification.

52. Article VI of the draft regulations, concerning evaluation, placed excessive reliance on self-evaluation. In any case, consideration of that article was premature and should be postponed until the thirty-eighth session.

53. As to the draft rules contained in document A/37/206/Add.1, his delegation found that in many cases they were worded too vaguely to ensure effective compliance. The proposed text seemed to reflect the Secretariat's desire to escape its responsibility to keep Member States informed and help them assign priorities.

53a. For all those reasons, his delegation believed that adoption of the draft regulations and rules should be postponed until the thirty-eighth session, especially since the Office of Legal Affairs had discerned in them a number of ambiguities that had to be resolved. Precipitousness would only serve to put the seal of approval on the disarray and negligence that currently prevailed in programme planning and budgeting.

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

Amendment of the Staff Regulations (A/C.5/37/54) (continued)

54. Mr. RUEDAS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), referring to document A/C.5/37/54 and to comments made by the representatives of Sweden and the USSR, said that, although paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's note spoke of a "comprehensive review of the subject undertaken recently", in fact the review, begun some months earlier, had not yet been completed. He drew the Committee's attention to document A/C.5/35/16, where the Secretary-General had as early as 1980 expressed his intention to undertake such a review.

55. The purpose of the new regulation was to recognize, first, the diversity of the Secretariat, secondly, the freedom of association of the staff and the need for a single staff representative body to discuss personnel questions with the Secretary-General and, thirdly, the special role of the Secretary-General as guarantor of equitable staff representation at each duty station.

56. With regard to the second point (freedom of association), the representative of the Soviet Union had mentioned the use of the word "unions" in paragraph 4 (c) of the note by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General did not intend to

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(Mr. Ruedas)

establish a system of staff representation which would function solely through unions, but their existence could not be ignored. The principle was that it was for the staff to determine the form and title of their association. That option was counterbalanced by the fact that the Secretary-General would deal only with one representative body.

57. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand), referring to the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of the Soviet Union concerning the item under consideration, said that his delegation was also concerned by certain incidents which had occurred during the session and which it deemed contrary to the interests of the staff. It believed, that the staff and its elected representatives must make their own decisions, but hoped that they would continue to show a sense of responsibility. The proposals of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/37/54 would certainly help to improve staff-management relations, and the Fifth Committee could only gain thereby.

58. With regard to the use of the word "unions" in paragraph 4 (c) of the note by the Secretary-General, he said that it was not the first such case and quoted documents of the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions. He also pointed out that Regulation 8.1 (b) avoided the word "unions" by using the formulation "staff representative bodies".

59. Having heard the comments of the representative of the Soviet Union and the explanations by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management, and having consulted with other delegations, his delegation reaffirmed its support for the Secretary-General's proposals.

60. Mr. STAUR (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the ten member States of the European Economic Community, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/37/54), which not only reflected the evolution of staff-management relations but would also contribute to more harmonious relations in future.

61. The Secretary-General, and not the Fifth Committee, had the principal responsibility for managerial and staff representation questions. The proposed amendment combined two important elements, that of freedom of association and that of maximum administrative efficiency in the area of staff-management relations.

62. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had already expressed serious reservations concerning document A/C.5/37/54 and had, indicated, inter alia, that it did not agree with the proposed amendment, and especially with the interpretation given to it in the note by the Secretary-General.

63. After consulting the representatives of the various regional groups and of the Secretary-General and after hearing the statements just made by the representatives of New Zealand and Denmark, his delegation would not press for the adoption of the proposals it had made on 2 December. It was gratified, nevertheless, that the

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(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

members of the Committee and of the Secretariat were aware of them. There were already provisions in the Staff Regulations which, although not as precise as the proposals in question, governed the activities of the Secretariat staff. In that connection, he read out extracts from Staff Regulations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 and from paragraph 10 of annex I to the Regulations.

64. To work at the United Nations was an honour; the Organization was a unique international institution which aimed at maintaining international peace and security and ensuring broad international co-operation. The citizens of many States which had the privilege to serve in the United Nations Secretariat should not only be grateful for that opportunity but should also show themselves worthy of the noble principles for which the United Nations had been established and operated. From that point of view, anyone who examined the situation could only condemn those staff members, and he was referring only to the irresponsible elements in the Secretariat, who, in violation of the spirit and letter of the above-mentioned provisions, had participated in the recent disorders which had disrupted the work of the United Nations.

65. He recalled his delegation's proposal aimed at avoiding excessive haste in the adoption of the amendment proposed by the Secretary-General. The amendment should be given further and careful consideration, particularly by the International Civil Service Commission which, under article 15 of its Statutes, could make recommendations on the elaboration of general staff regulations. If the Secretary-General's proposal was put to the vote, his delegation would vote against it.

AGENDA ITEM 103: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 107: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued)

Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations (continued) (A/37/358 and Corr.2 and Add.1, A/37/684; A/C.5/37/27)

66. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that for several years the Committee had been reviewing the use of consultants and experts, the financial implications of which had been \$5.8 million in the biennium 1974-1975 and \$16 million in the biennium 1980-1981. The number of experts and consultants had more than doubled from 1970 to 1980. Growth of that magnitude was unacceptable to his delegation. Member States must resist the urge to create ad hoc expert groups or to appoint consultants, instead of looking to the talent already available within the United Nations.

67. The Secretary-General had disputed many of the conclusions of the Joint Inspection Unit regarding the implementation of the existing guidelines. Some of his views had some merit with regard to conclusions which were not entirely convincing. It was necessary, however, to reduce departures from the existing provisions, and his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee's observation in paragraph 4 of its report (A/37/684) that departures should occur only in exceptional circumstances and should be fully reported.

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(Mr. Keller, United States)

68. The Joint Inspection Unit's analysis of equitable geographical distribution in the employment of consultants deserved special attention. Consultants were hired for short periods of time and were selected on the basis of their competence. They were experts, and not decision-makers. Strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution in their case might delay the completion of a project. The Secretary-General should therefore be allowed to use flexibility, especially since the current regional distribution did not appear to be unreasonable. Any further guidance from the General Assembly on that matter was unnecessary.

69. His delegation endorsed the recommendation of the JIU that the methods for determining consultant requirements be interrelated with the methods for determining staff requirements. It also welcomed the statement of the Secretary-General that the budgetary process had been tightened. It had reservations, however, concerning recommendation 5 (b) of the JIU concerning the establishment of rosters of candidates by specific fields, a solution which could be administratively burdensome.

70. With regard to recommendation 6 concerning the level of remuneration for consultants who were former staff members receiving pension from the Joint Staff Pension Fund, his delegation supported both the alternatives proposed by JIU: the first would eliminate the criticisms of experienced retired United Nations civil servants who were hired to undertake tasks which they had been doing prior to retirement and who thus drew two incomes. Consultancy fees, even reduced as suggested by JIU, would probably be sufficient to attract retired staff members. The second proposal would improve the actuarial balance of the Fund. The rehired staff member would be treated as a regular consultant whose retirement payments would be suspended for the period of his consultancy.

71. The Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency had adopted policies that had curbed the abuse of "double-dipping", and the United Nations could follow their example. Many Governments had similar rules affecting their retired civil servants. The Committee should endorse recommendation 6 of JIU. The remarks of the Secretary-General and of the Advisory Committee on the subject had not altered that view.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.